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THE PUPPETEERS OF AMERICA

THE PUPPETEERS OF AMERICA is a national non-profit organization whose object is the improvement of the art of puppetry. The organization is governed by a national council elected by the membership.

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At Home With Marjorie

Edward Hirsch

The following intimate glimpse of Marjorie Shanafelt at home is possible through the courtesy of the NEBRASKA ALUMNUS and Edward Hirsch, Assistant Director of Public Relations, University of Nebraska, author of the article.

A turquoise-blue bungalow on a sparsely traveled side-street in Lincoln rests in a quiet neighborhood with the same modest air and hidden artistic qualities as has its owner.

The visitor is impressed by the simplicity of the facade of the house, emphasized by the unique but pleasant coloring, but by nothing more.

The first inkling of its unusual contents, however, may reach the visitor after pushing the nose of a clown which actuates the doorbell. But this suspicion fades when the visitor is greeted by an unpretentious vivacious, gray-haired woman who ushers her guest into a meticulous living room, decorated in pale blues.

After the first scant glimpse of the room, the visitor filters out the blue coloring and suddenly notices, dotting the walls, various puppet figures, hanging from picture cords attached to the ceiling moulding. And then the visitor is attracted to what was once the dining room, but which now houses a miniature stage, upon which sits a tuxedoed marionette with hands poised before a piano.

This is the residence and show place of Miss Marjorie Shanafelt, known in puppeteering circles and the state of Nebraska as one of the noted non-professional puppeteers in America.

She has gained fame in the past 23 years by "pulling strings" before more than 500,000 persons, most of them Nebraskans. A charter member of the Puppeteers of America, organized in 1937 to advance the cause of pup-

petry, Miss Shanafelt has shunned the theatrical circuit, except for one brief show in Copenhagen, Denmark — an experience she now refers to "as the most thrilling of my life."

The puppets which hang on the living room walls are museum pieces, collected by her over the past two decades. Among the hanging figures are a 150-year-old hand puppet, a sacred puppet said to be stolen from a temple in Batavia, Java, a Javanese shadow puppet, a Russian jumping jack, and a two-hand Hungarian puppet. A portrait puppet of Mark Twain, from Tony Sarg's studio, sits with pipe in hand on an end-table.

These valuable puppets play a necessary part in the evening of entertainment awaiting the visitor. While Miss Shanafelt arranges her puppets for the program — the preparation of which takes no more than 15 minutes — the guests amuse themselves by examining the antiques.

And then seated in chairs of varying heights to compensate for the flat floor in the living room, the guests face the stage, where the puppets in an original play evoke deep thought, laughter, and sometimes tears.

After the play ends, the guests, as many as 30, are asked to slide their chairs toward the nearest wall forming a three-foot-wide aisle lengthwise in the room. In this space, the puppeteer exhibits her floor-show puppets and her versatility. These trick performers are manipulated by Miss Shanafelt in full view of the audience.

Her trick figures—one, The Marquis, juggles his head, another, a gawdy bird, lays an egg that hatches, and yet another, small Priscilla, brings innumerable rabbits out of a much-too-small hutch — are originated by the imaginative Miss Shanafelt.

In sharp similarity to her home,

Miss Shanafelt's appearance does not reveal her hidden qualities to the casual acquaintance who may have met her for the first time at the University of Nebraska State Museum, where she is assistant to the director.

If questioned about how one becomes a puppeteer, she says:

"You get yourself some books and eventually make a clown. The clown calls for a little stage, and then, of course, he has to have a companion to warrant various clever remarks, so there must be a dog, or a donkey, or something else. The stage calls for lights; the lights for a control board; the control board for scenery to Columbines and Pierrots; the Columbines need music; the music needs interspersed works and about this time you wake up to find yourself a first-class bore to your best friends."

Her entry into puppetry was connected with museum work at the University of Nebraska. In 1931 means were sought to attract persons not generally inclined to visit museums. Miss Shanafelt fell upon the idea of having puppet shows to entice children accompanied by their parents.

The first show in the Museum's auditorium was an overwhelming success with "hundreds turned away."

The programs continued with Miss Shanafelt putting on two performances each year. In 1939, she turned from cloth puppets to plastic wood figures, which permitted a wider range of characters.

In the early forties, the Museum decided to discontinue the programs, but by that time, Miss Shanafelt's puppets were in demand across the state.

Since the programs at the Museum, she has acquired more skill and conceived the idea of placing hooks over the stage upon which to hang the performing puppets. The hook device, still unique in puppetry, eliminated the need of assistants and enabled Miss Shanafelt to control from 10 to 12 puppets by herself. The secret of

puppetry, she confided, is to have only the puppet which is speaking move; the rest must remain motionless.

Last year, she began teaching an evening class in puppetry which is offered through the University's Extension Division. She usually has about 10 enrollees of all ages, who hold their 10-week sessions at Miss Shanafelt's home. During the non-credit course, they create a play and the puppets needed for the drama.

"Some people look upon puppets merely as dolls which are used to amuse the children," she commented. "But this is far from the truth."

The history of puppetry goes back as far as civilization. Their inspiration has produced "a mountain of art of all kinds which can hardly be equalled by any other single source."

Wealthy and luxurious places of the 16th to 19th centuries had theatres only for puppets. Famous artists of the day were engaged to write, compose, and paint for the wooden actors. Michelangelo carved the heads for the puppets that crowded the palace of his patron.

The great Haydn composed five operettas for puppets, and the names of musicians who wrote for puppets are legion. Some of them were Adolph Adam, Mozart, Stradella, Ziana, dal Gaudio, Toch, Weinberger, Honegger, and Respighi. And the same is true of the writers and dramatists. Socrates, Voltaire, Goethe, George Sand, Bernard Shaw, and Shakespeare wrote complete dramas for puppets.

And the puppets have served as a means of education. China for hundreds of years depended on traveling puppeteers to teach the history of the nation's past and to bring news of the outside world to the hamlets.

The art of puppetry also has been used to sway an audience into a desired reaction. In oppressed countries puppets have instilled courage for rebellion, or for endurance, and have been able to taunt their oppressors in collo-

qualisms that no on-guard soldier could comprehend. If the puppeteer was found out, he paid for his patriotism with his life. In the oppression of Czechoslovakia, more than 300 puppeteers were executed. Russia first stopped all puppet companies then later allowed them to continue — under supervision, of course. At present the United States is paying a puppeteer, Francesco Cardoni of Rome, to present puppets in the interest of our country. He travels the width and breadth of Italy.

And the puppets did a magnificent job as spies during World War II, as they have through the centuries. Puppeteers carried, by code, messages of great import to members of the audiences.

In her hundreds of performances, Miss Shanafelt's biggest thrill came in 1949 during a visit in Copenhagen, Denmark. While she and her puppets were visiting friends there, a booking agent for the Palace, the largest entertainment palace in Denmark, happened to be present at one of her informal shows. He liked what he saw and persuaded the American to present one show at the Palace.

The Palace is comparable to New York City's night clubs, except the customers dine at tables arranged on semi-circle tiers facing the stage. The night clubbers eat while the acts are in progress. When Miss Shanafelt made her appearance, "the hall became completely silent. I didn't know what to do, but I was told afterward that in Denmark the manipulator never appears in full view of the audience.

"After I had completed, I received a tremendous applause. Backstage, the manager told me that Danes seldom clap unless the King is present and leads the applause. 'You should consider yourself highly honored,' he said."

Miss Shanafelt received many offers to stay in Denmark and tour the country, which has many lovers of pup-

petry, but she turned them all down, saying:

"Puppeteering wouldn't be any fun if I had to perform three or four shows a day. I know it would become monotonous. I would grow wearied of my own efforts and more often even careless. As an amateur I need only to take enough engagements to keep my repertoire in mind. Then neither I nor my puppets will grow jaded, shopworn, or prosaic. By my appearing only at intervals, the pleasure and pride in my art is kept at a high pitch."

She shall never forget the trip, but in her own home, filled with guests, she gains the satisfaction of sensing the approval of her work. The puppets live. And she, the puppeteer, glows with the thought, "This has been born of my brain, given the very breath of life through my fingers and my voice."



Pre-Fest

Anne Thurman, Chairman of the 1956 Festival announces a Pre-Fest for Saturday Jan. 14th for all P of A members in the mid west section. She advises that she will try to send special notice to those within 100 mile radius of Evanston, but any one passing through or who wishes to take a longer trip is definitely welcome. The object of the meeting which will be held at North Western University Theater from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. is largely Festival planning, although shows and exhibits will be thrown in for good measure. Drop a card to Anne if you can plan to go. 2308 Park Place, Evanston, Ill.

Scheffel Reviews

Herb Scheffel

THE FESTIVAL DARK HORSE

You know how it goes at festival mealtimes — everyone jams into the restaurants and experiences fly fast and thick. Thanks to circus talk, or I would have missed the opportunity of seeing one of the best unscheduled offerings presented at the Bowling Green Puppetry Festival — Robert Mason's Puppets.

When Mason said he'd worked, last season, for the "Old Man" on Hunt Brothers Circus (side show), I had a hunch he had to be good. For it's a rough life on that truck and trailer "mud" show up and down the Jersey to Maine coastline. And you've got to have something to "sell."

Mason was not officially billed on any of the programs for the festival week, but I was curious to see his work before a P. of A. audience. I had a hunch there might be others who would like to see a good old London Punch Show. And there wasn't a bona fide Punchman on the program all week. Punch and Judy are the core of all puppetry and we think this old standard tale should be performed at each conference by a George Larson, Tommy Trent, Robert Mason, George Prentice, Dagmar, Mary Williams, etc.

So without the least bit of trepidation, I egged Mason on, all week, to sign up for one of the many informal Pot Pourri's — and succeeded in getting him set for the last one, last program, last night. The rest is minor history of the festival week. Delegates who were too weary to take "just one more hand puppet show" retired, but about 2/3rds of them in the Gate Theatre were revived by a show that was a show of hand puppets. It might best be described as a dozen

strings of sputtering, crackling fire-crackers, the way the asides and ad libs, interspersed the standard Punch and Judy plot. Oh how the audience roared and slapped their sides.

Here, at last, was what we'd all been waiting for — a real knock down, drag 'em out, pell mell, melee of a Punch performance, done by a performer with plenty of "know how." Here was an entertainer who hadn't made a puppet in his whole life, but had all the angles to project life, meaning and personality into his figures. Craftmanship, the details of painting, costuming and building figures didn't matter — it was what Mason did with his timber Duses and Barrymores that had them interested and laughing and entertained. It was a "five knothole performance" from start to finish. The show zipped along, straight ahead, a mad fight, screeching and yelling until you thought — "now that's just about enough of your ranting and raving" — when suddenly Mason put on the brakes — dropped an ad lib, wise, sly, spontaneous and sharp, like a slap in the face, and you doubled up in laughter.

Here was the showmanship, the timing, voice-coloring, and the hilarity you expected of a puppet show — what we'd been waiting for all week. But it was all too short. Like a true showman, an experienced mountebank — who came to this conclusion only by performing, performing and performing — Robert Mason, after being on less than 20 minutes, came to a sudden halt, took a curt bow — a snappy flourish of the hand, and was off. No one, following him, dared be a

success.

In analyzing his technique, it seems that if you can't project, act or make with the story-line — there's no use building elaborate puppets or the rest of your show. It seems such a waste of time, energy, materials for the potential puppeteer and his audience, to build productions, if the "know how" on how to read lines, time, pause, use your voice, etc. isn't there. No wonder so many puppet shows are flops — the physical production is photogenic, they look handsome in exhibitions, but — where's the play's life?

For further analysis of Mason's technique, let's investigate his experience: he has had innumerable years of entertaining and performing — having worked as a magician and ventriloquist, besides being a puppeteer — years of appearing before audiences, testing lines, channels of humor for varied audiences, dropping weak lines from his show, incorporating or discarding bits of "business" in order to build a real-gone routine. He was a featured clown with Cole Brothers Railroad Circus and did his Punch act in this once second largest circus in the world. He has had movie experience, toured the school assembly program circuits with his trio of acts, played convention, banquet and club-dates under all sorts of conditions, plus the season on Hunt Brothers Circus sideshow. It wasn't an overnight thing that entertained us that July 1st night.

Like the Wallace Sisters' work — that performance was the result of constant performing. That performance wasn't overlong — it was pruned to just sure-fire-stuff, not an unnecessary word or gesture — and, hold your hats — all without the aid of a Punch whistle, too.

The one serio-comic bit, where Mr. Punch tenderly wheedles the baby into walking across the stage, into his arms, was real to everyone out front. How cunningly, insistantly, he encouraged that block of wood and old rags to totter from left to right stage — an easy feat as far as manipulating goes, but how convincing that voice coloring was — such assurance that it was possible for a six months old baby to do it — and try it just once more.

With Robert Mason, the play's still the thing to sell. He can make you believe with his voice and gestures and puppets without moveable eyes, nose, mouth and et cetera. As George Latshaw so ably puts it: "Who does the dancing — Gene Kelly or the shoes?"

After having seen such a real showman at work in his cabinet, there is no wonder about his being constantly in demand, working steadily and hardly ever "at liberty."

Besides being a member of P. of A., Mason is a popular and active member of the International Platformn Association.

MARCEAU, THE MIME

There is a little man, with big expressive hands and a painted chalk-white face, who drew the raviest, personal notices of the new theatre season in New York City (at the time of this writing.) His full evening of pantomime solo works could easily be tagged "Look Ma — No words!"

No props — no costume changes, no sets, no strings, no mirrors. It is all

done with gestures. I hasten to inform you, in the interest of puppetry, not to miss Marcel Marceau, the celebrated French mime, when he tours the United States and Canada, this Fall and Winter.

Since the accent on pantomime leans heavily — just as important as the voice, in puppet characterization, it will be a profitable evening for the

puppetry beginner to study a genius at this ancient, neglected, magic art. More than occasional scenes in puppet plays depend solely on pantomime — variety acts (with few exceptions) are entirely done in pantomime. M. Marceau's personal theatre would make an inspiring classroom for an evening.

The subtlety, timing, pauses, facial and body gestures, comedy, pathos and rhythm he pulls out of his back of tricks will stimulate you no end. He is, in short — a mime, an actor, comic and dancer — a great artist from whom we can learn much to add to puppetry.

There is a mystery that relates puppetry and pantomime — both are linked with stylizing character into caricature. And both skirt the realm of realism. Gordon Craig once said "The art of the mime consists in concealing the trick and that of the puppet show, precisely to use the trickery." In Marceau's own words: "Pantomime is the art of expressing feelings by attitudes and not a means of expressing words through gestures." In puppetry, both words and attitude are important.

In his 2-week engagement at the Phoenix Theatre in New York City, which opened September 20, the audience lived through a dozen experiences — running the gamut from sadness, the poetic, and satire. Incidental music is used sparingly to set the "point." Titles were painted on large black cards and two assistant mimes, colorfully garbed as dresden china period pieces of two mountebanks, announced each number in a "frozen" tableau style. The stage is bare every second — a huge box or two for pedestals, a huge single "flat," a pitch black curtain are the only stage "dressing." Lack of props only pointed up Marceau's showmanship and strong numbers, carefully placed to build to a climax as in a variety show.

Marceau's timing is miraculous —

make a point of watching his expressive hands and eyes — they could play a whole pantomime alone. In white ballet shoes, white pants, basque shirt, short gray jacket and the most battered hat ever seen, he holds a mirror for us to see ourselves. When his touch is "light" it sings — when it's "heavy" you'd swear you heard that thud.

As an allied art to puppetry, the puppet manipulator would profit from witnessing a performance or two. A knowledge of pantomime would add to the beginner's showmanship. It is an art form bred with purity — devoid of materials and using only the human figure.

The things to be observed at a performance by Marceau are his (1) brevity of "plots" — which could be applied to your puppet variety numbers. Each situation is trimmed to the core of any superfluous gestures — reaching your "big finish" by building your situation sans waste or monotonous repetition and sequences; (2) how, through subtle, built-up repetition of the right gesture, if placed correctly in the routine, or humorously styled and placed, can lead to a surprise twist or finish of a number; (3) timing and pauses; (4) the skill of exquisite shading or the emphasis on the proper wordless "expression;" (5) facial gestures, a great help to exaggerate the modeling of your puppet heads, immediately identifying "types;" (6) body movements, so that (a) you have your costuming problems almost solved in advance and (b) rhythm and contrasting tempos style and polish your divertissements. (An excellent example of all the above, placed into one number which is done at every performance, is Marceau's breath-taking moment or two called "Youth, Maturity, Old Age and Death.")

Part One, on the program, consists of "Style Pantomimes" — all excellent, simple studies of movement — exercises in "walking, tug-of-war, the

staircase, at the clothiers, walking against the wind, the Public Garden, etc. Part Two concentrates on Marceau's original character BIP, a poignant sort of Chaplinesque personality, who goes skating, paints, tames lions, travels by train, hunts butterflies, dances a polka, etc. Every flick, bend, stretch, yawn, rush, surprise or failute of his "music of silence" will put contrast into your puppet show. But the greatest quality of his work, which binds it closest of all to puppets, is that it is studded with humor, humor and more humor.

Marcel Marceau was first a member of Jean-Louis Barrault's company,

1946, in Paris. He created BIP in 1947, formed his own company 1949, toured every country on the continent, as well as England, Israel, Scotland, Canada, South America and North Africa in 1952. Following an extended 2 week engagement at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre which opened October 4 (after the 2-week Phoenix Theatre debut, in New York City) his company will tour the United States and Canada. He has been booked for his first Japanese tour, early in 1956.

On Dec. 4, Marceau will be an added attraction on the Maurice Chevalier "Spectacular" produced by Max Liebman.

COLOSSAL, GIGANTIC, STUPENDOUS

Heaven help the agents, bookers, managers and independent producers, once the public has seen "Marionette Theatre," a (live) puppet spectacular presented by Bil and Cora Baird, under the exclusive management of the William Morris Agency, Inc.

Should the Morris office successfully route the extravaganza, the puppet talent buyers and the customers will be demanding more of the same. For this glittering riot of color, movement, humor and perfection will set a tremendous new high in standards, once seen on tour. Depending on what the "nut" or asking figure is for the production, of course. Should it prove to be a money-maker, other producers will have to shoot an enormous bankroll to come up to the level of this elaborate Baird sensation.

Two performances of "Marionette Theatre" were presented at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, matinee and evening, Saturday, October 29th—their only New York appearance. In two acts, every ounce of Baird perfection shone at its brightest . . . and smacked of a healthy financial investment. Part one was a full-length play "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves," part two in-

corporated their smash variety turns with a short history and demonstration of all types of puppets.

The show is the most extravagant ever seen. It is sock stuff for the stage or concert or TV presentation. It has plenty of illusion, surprise, dance, talking animals, music, color and lyrics. The fast-paced medium of the TV spectacular is most in evidence. The script for "Ali Baba" is trimmed and timed to move with the speed of a motion picture. To make this possible, the TV method of having several sets to "pan" through is solved by having not one — but three stages plus, onstage . . . i.e., a stage for humanettes, a tremendous marionette stage, a hand puppet booth and two "totem-pole" looking stages, at each end of the marionette state, with four windows in each used by heckling, singing or commenting hand puppets. Besides this, the big marionette stage can be used "in one" or full stage . . . an extra set of mid-stage draw curtains can be used while the back of the marionette stage is being set for the next scene. There is never a lull — the action flows and takes up immediately on one stage or the other,

when a scene closes on still another stage. The set up really must be seen to be believed.

The script is as tight as a drum — each scene ends with the audience waiting for the next to begin — and it does — no waits, no musical interludes to wile away three to five minutes for a set change, no “selected selections” to pad the time of the show. The puppet cast is brilliantly costumed, with the broad Baird stamp of sharp exaggeration and caricature on animals and people-puppets, so that they can be seen perfectly at the back of a large house. Over it all is a thick coating of Baird humor, imagination and showmanship. There are inventive bits scattered throughout the play that spell real showmanship, as the human, Oriental masked and costumed Genii, who lifts the Sultan Shariar on his silken cushion right out of the harem, when Scheherezade starts weaving her story of Ali Baba and the thieves. A second later we see the Genii and Sultan flying across a huge expanse of turquoise sky, in miniature, and the next second the play continued with the live Genii and puppet Sultan in one of the side puppet booths. (That'll give you an example of the speed in continuity of the Baird show.) Other highlights of imagination in the play-portion were the tremendous “Open Sesame” cave scene, with an enormous papier mache rock, opening and closing to the accompaniment of music that added to the suspense; the ingenious ballet of walnut-sized pearls, numerous money bags, writhing, breathing heaps of diamonds and rubies; the interludes that used animals; the magician-shadow puppet interlude, etc. Throughout the play, there was contrast, contrast, variety of moods and staging; one mood sequed dramatically into another with the greatest of ease and the benefit of the TV or movie physical element of many set stages. It is a dazzling production, in spite of one lurid scene in

which they pulled all the blood-curdling strings in puppetdom for a frightful (to kids, we imagine) finish to the sequence leading up to the moment when Ali's rich and cruel brother Cassim, is to be beheaded and slit in two, onstage.

Following the intermission, the puppeteers paraded a dozen or more variety and production numbers: “Overture,” which made use of the humanette puppet medium, through a mad conductor and fun with musical instruments and sweet and sour visual notes; “Hawaiian War Chant,” playing between the marionette and hand puppet stages, using all the tomfoolery of Spike Jones' madness and humor; “Cast and Characters” was a clever way to introduce all the manipulators — it gave a chance to sketch briefly the history of puppets, to introduce and demonstrate Javanese rod puppets, Sicilian metal marionettes, a bit with a miniature restaurant set built on castors — to show off two “glutton-heads” gorging themselves (made of the puppeteers hands with tiny hats and painted finger mouths — and a hand-handkerchief head figure, suitable for quick party entertainment; “Wild Horses” was a horse opera-ballet, seen before on TV, which finished with six of the Baird's “Fahooley” pony ballet figures; “Crazy, Man, Crazy” was a set of loose jointed twin oafs, who hep-catted their way into the “little white-coated” man's wagon and out of it again; “Bertha Katt” vamped a string of millionaires, purring prone on a chaise longue, to the tune of “C'est Ci Bon,” another Baird TV turn. There was a very amusing bit done with two-gloved hands and two wooden balls on index fingers — reminiscent of Les Mains Joly, a comic romantic episode wherein each figure painted faces on one another, donned ridiculous hats, courted, — a lake was sketched on a blackboard by one figure, the other brought in a yellow canoe, they paddled back and forth

and ended in a resounding kiss while the romantic music swelled; there was a clever bit of abstract puppetry in the form of two geometric, metal looking elements, that twisted and bent and swayed and changed forms and shapes before the audience's eyes; and finally the variety portion closed with a fast paced "Sabre Dance" by warriors and a speedy, pirouetting ballerina, all done without built-in motors.

It's a lot of puppet show and you get your money's worth. You come away with the feeling that you've seen everything possible that can be done with any type of puppet. Most of the

sound effects and music are recorded. Voices are live. Recorded music and singing voices are used for the variety half. It takes a full-sized bus to transport and about two hours to tear down.

"Marionette Theatre" was produced by Bil Baird and directed by Bert Shevelove, with Bil and Cora Baird, Frank Sullivan, Franz Frazakas, Ray Hedge, Carl Harms and Erasmo Romero. "Ali Baba" was written by Allen Stern and Bil Baird. The songs and dances were from the department of George Kleinsinger, and Joe Darion handled the lyrics.

So help us — Hannah!!!

Alice in Wonderland

George Latshaw

The Hallmark Hall of Fame returned to the air October 23 with Maurice Evans as producer and host of the new series. The production for this auspicious premiere was "Alice in Wonderland," with a cast of actors and actresses from Broadway, Hollywood and abroad, and it was lavishly presented on NBC in color and black-and-white. Needless to say, it was "brillig."

By combining incidents from Alice's adventure in Wonderland with her trip through the Looking Glass, the show was able to cover a good deal of ground, both classic and commercial, in the hour and a half. We first met Alice curled up in a chair with her kitten. Presently, a small white rabbit appeared on the other side of the mirror. Curious, Alice climbed up on the mantelpiece and stepped through the looking glass in a swirl of smoke. On the other side, she found a small door, leading to a garden, but Alice was a big girl and did not fit in this dimension. A magic potion soon cut her down to size, and she was off on

a walking tour of the eccentricities of Wonderland. She met the Caterpillar, for whom she recited "You Are Old Father William" (and which was thoughtfully illustrated in pantomime.) In short order, Alice had met the Fish Footman, the Duchess, the Cook, the Cheshire Cat, the baby (who is a little pig), and Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee. The Bumps-a-Daisy twins gave an exuberant rendition of "The Walrus and the Carpenter" which was also pantomimed with a Walrus, a Carpenter and a quartet of oysters who looked exactly like the Tenniel illustrations.

At a croquet game with the King, the Queen and the Duchess, Alice met the Griffon who led her on to see the Mock Turtle sing and dance. Then to the teaparty with the Mad Hatter, the March Hare and the Dormouse; and on to the frenzy of the trial scene. (Commercial) Alice returned to exchange polite twaddle with the Red Queen, the White Queen, Humpty Dumpty and the White Knight, before

(Continued on page 22)



ELIZABETH MERTEN

Pictured here is Elizabeth Merten, Toronto, and Aubrey, a hand-puppet raccoon made by the Mertens and operated by Elizabeth in a C.B.C. Children's Television Series called "Mostly About Aubrey and Gus." The programme is on the air at 4:45 p.m. E.S.T. on Mondays over Channels 4, 6 and 9 in Canada (and it is reported from Detroit that it can be seen there at 12:45 p.m. over Channel 9).

Aubrey is a raccoon with a problem — he speaks like a boy, and his own folk can't understand him at all. He makes friends with a human boy, called Gus, who suggests that perhaps somewhere there may be a boy with a raccoon's voice and that he and Aubrey could exchange. They set off together on the search, always following the N on the compass. (Gus had previously taken off the needle because it kept moving). During their travels they have many adventures, which include meeting other puppet animals.

BENJIMAN BLAKE

Highly fitting was the debut of Benjamin Blake's artistic puppets by the Rockport Art Association in Studio 9 Theatre. This fantastic little touring theatre complete with scenery, music, light, scenery and diminutive players has entertained many people around Boston and Rockport. Mr. Blake trained in the Rhode Island School of Design and Museum of Fine Arts. The Ben Moore Gallery displays his artistic abilities and his dramatic talents with a charming puppet from the show "The Real Princess."

PUPPET PARADE

(see photo section)

MARJORIE SHANAFELT

Marjorie Shanafelt and her large family of puppets are so well described in the Nebraska University ALUMNUS, which we reproduce here, that no further introduction is necessary. Those who attended Fest at Bowling Green will remember Marjorie's fine demonstration of shadow puppets.

EVANSTON JUNIOR LEAGUE

Mr. Will Jordan and Mrs. Edwin B. Thurman (Ann to you), chairman of the 1956 Puppetry Festival, pose with three of their puppets. These puppets were used to herald the Evanston Junior League's benefit, a presentation of Ed Sullivan and his "Toast of the Town."

Posed around Will Jordan with their puppets are the Evanston Junior League members, left to right, Augusta Long, Nancy Lippincott, Carolyn Fargo, Libby Sollis, Ann Thurman, Aubrey Hynes, and Carolyn Whipple.

Our future hostesses of the 1956 Puppet Festival are so busy with their present puppet programs that it looks as though they may be able to furnish all of the Festival programs themselves.

The Chicago and Evanston papers are ecstatically reporting the Evanston Junior League's activities with their puppets. The articles are divided in their admiration for the puppet parodies themselves and the League's purposes behind the shows — to publicize the Ed Sullivan Show that will raise money for the League's welfare work.

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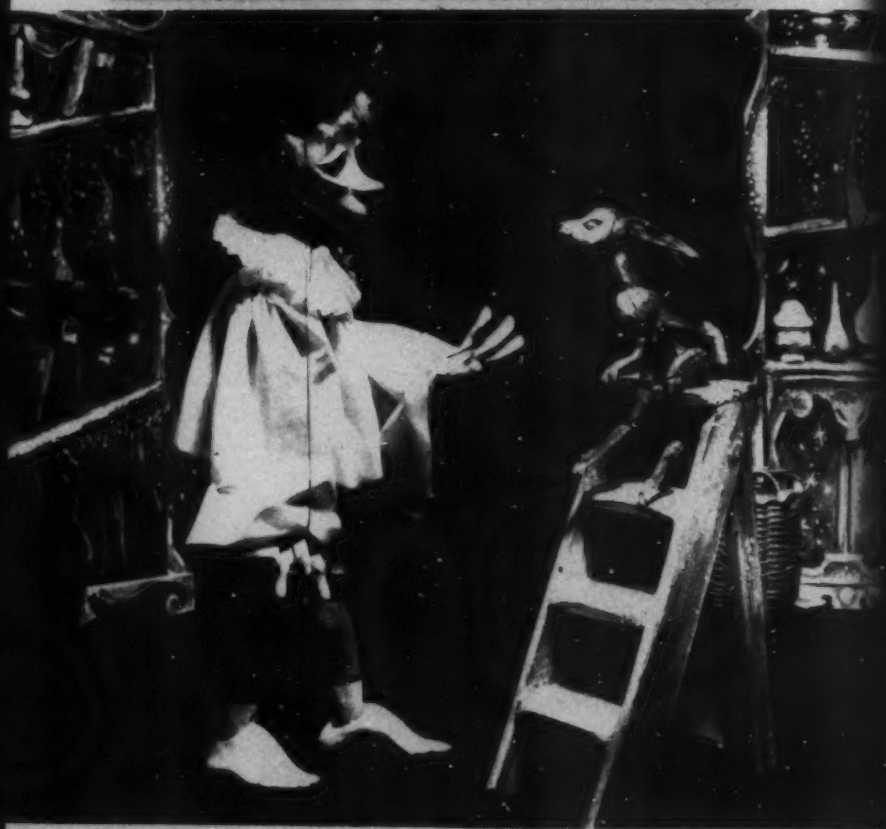
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Elizabeth Merten *with* Aubrey

Beckman Block



Benjiman Blake



Marjorie Shanafelt



Evanston League





Della Bird



television puppets



Children's Corner



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best means for advertising the Toast of the Town, the League members, with the 1956 Festival Chairman, Ann Thurman, taking a lead, are presenting enchanting programs of their own in and about Chicago. By now, one part of the show — a hula dancing elephant, Petunia, a bashful monacled lion who would rather eat ice cream cones than be king of beasts, and a green-eyed clown have made their television debuts. Another part of this whimsical circus act has been pronounced a distinct success at the Chicago Racquet Club while still another miniature preview has been shown at the Empire Room of the Palmer House. In this act two charming grey mice resplendent in frou frou feather hats and decked out in sables and ermine popped on the stage and sang, "We are Junior Leaguers if you Please." A white cat in jet black spangled gown impersonated Miss Marion Marlowe who will appear on Ed Sullivan's program for the benefit night.

These League girls are really talented. They wrote the script, supplied the songs, made the puppets and their actions.

The League has long used puppet-making for shut-ins as one of their chief projects, and any puppeteer who attended the Bowling Green Festival will remember the Evanston League's beautiful display.

It looks like any group who will so wholeheartedly enter into a project displaying numerous abilities in all types of organization and such creative and imaginative skills will always be a success in any undertaking. The 1956 Festival promises to be a whopping success.

DELLA BIRD

Mrs. Lee Bird (Della) of Hettinger, North Dakota, spends most of her available free time working on her marionette "family." Starting with her hobby in 1944, she now has con-

structed over 60 members of this family. At first she constructed strictly for her own amusement. Later she started to give marionette shows to her students who became so fascinated that she is now conducting popular classes in puppetry.

Because of her interests in marionettes she was asked to become a member of the North Dakota Committee of the Institute for Regional Studies. This committee who makes plans to serve and stimulate all North Dakota craftsman will form the nucleus of North Dakota Craftsman Guild.

Mrs. Bird is shown here remodeling her variety show, a half hour show which includes a hula dancer, tandem skaters, a break-away singer and a juggler

ROBERT MASON

Herb Scheffel reviews Robert Mason's "Pot Pourri" production at Fest under title of "The Festival Dark Horse" in this issue. From all reports we will hear more of Robert at next Festival.

CHILDREN'S CORNER

Josie Carey from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, scores a distinct success with a new show. From NBC-TV on Saturday at 10:30 till 11:00 comes the "Children's Corner" which substituted for the vacationing Paul Winchell show.

Presided over with delightful charm by a highly talented young lady, Josie Carey, the world of the "Children's Corner" is as beguiling as any that TV has yet created for the entertainment of children. Even "Kukla, Fran and Ollie," which originated this type of program, would be hard pressed seeing to its laurels in the face of comparison.

The influence of Fran Allison and Burr Tillstrom on this show is evident, but it's a good influence although the

Carey-Rogers team lacks the humor and imagination of the "Kukla, Fran & Ollie" creators. The latter series, in fact, had considerable adult appeal whereas the "Children's Corner" is slanted strictly for the tots. There's an educational peg (teaching of manners, songs, some foreign phrases, etc.)

Miss Carey, moreover, scores with a highly attractive personality. Young and enthusiastic, she doesn't appear to be patronizing the kids even though she figuratively gets on her hands and knees to play with them. An assortment of puppet characters, including some tigers, cats, owls, etc., are adeptly handled by Rogers who is also from Pittsburgh, with the script mostly

riding a whimsical mood. There's also a participation angle for kid viewers who want to join a club run by the Carey-Rogers duo.

Each of the puppet characters lives in his own part of the over-all set, which is mainly a backdrop. All of them are neighbors and friends. Most of the show consists of conversations between Miss Carey and the various puppets, whom she visits in turn, occasionally bringing two of them together at the same time. These conversations, which are geared to the interests of children between two and five, are handled with a charm that would appeal to adult viewers as well.

ALICE IN WONDERLAND

(Continued from page 11)

she awoke in the comfort of her arm-chair with her kitten in her lap. Mr. Evans was standing behind her smiling at us all, and he led Alice off camera and, we presume, back to reality.

Miss Gillian Barber, a young English actress, made a thoroughly charming and delightful Alice. Her precise diction and patient good manners in dealing with the creatures of Wonderland were a marvel to behold. The creatures of Wonderland were something else again.

The costumes, make-up and masks were magnificent — authentic recreations of the original illustrations; but, as puppeteers may have discovered, a costume will not give a performance, and a few of the actors in this production were pale beside their trappings. Characters whose appearances are preposterous, should also sound or act preposterous. Not all of them managed it.

Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee had a devilish school-boy verve that was fun, and Martyn Green hopped away

like a real White Rabbit. From the first gruff growl of the Cheshire Cat, Burr Tillstrom had established a new character, unlike any of the endearing personalities on "Kukla, Frank and Ollie." The Cheshire Cat simply was! Puppeteers may have been disappointed by the brevity of the scene, and the indistinct image of the Cat, which appeared and disappeared, but the fast pace of production allowed for no dawdling over special effects. It was on to the next and circle four — no stops for people, puppets or procrastination. The drill team of oysters (finger puppets) in "The Walrus and the Carpenter" sequence were also used accessories to the scene without special close-ups for choreography. The technical difficulties of super-imposing two shots in this sequence was so beautifully handled, most viewers were unaware there was anything unusual going on. The first uncontrollable sobs of the Mock Turtle scored another bright characterization for Burr Tillstrom — and the chance to sing with abandon and dance a shell-flapping quadrille for Alice. Miss Eva

LeGallienne and Miss Elsa Lanchester were superb as the White Queen and the Red Queen respectively. They are both familiar with the fantastic, and played their roles with all the ups and downs and rich embroidery that can make nonsense a genuine delight. Reginald Gardiner, as the White Knight askew on his horse with the cloppety human legs, also rode through

with fine effect.

Like Alice, one discovers a few things on a trip to Wonderland. Sense can be listened to with half an ear and the gist is clear; nonsense takes both ears and a considerable amount of concentration. Children of the age of Alice had no comment. The production was directed by George Schaeffer.

Who Said Festival?

Libby Sollis

If you've just laid last season's bathing suit away in the attic for a long winter's nap, this item is going to give you a bit of a jolt, because it's time to start thinking FESTIVAL again!

Of course, we're not asking you to give the 1956 Festival your undivided attention at this moment, but as food for odd-hour thought — say when you're turning the desk inside out looking for the Christmas card list — mull over these first facts lightly and see if you come up with any interesting ideas, questions or suggestions, will you?

First of all, you remember, FESTIVAL 1956 will be held at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. (Make a mental note on the exact location of that bathing suit, because you'll be within morning plunge distance of Lake Michigan, and while the idea may leave you shuddering now, the big blue will look mighty inviting come August).

In addition to such natural lures, Northwestern offers the man made comforts of an air conditioned auditorium, modern, conveniently located dormitories, and streamlined cafeteria service.

Then too, there's Chicago, and handy transportation service to the city within a few blocks of the campus. And there will be free time allowed for in the schedule for those who want to

make a quick side trip into town during festival week.

Workshop was felt to be so successful last summer that it has been decided to make it a two day affair in '56. The idea has been forwarded that there might be more emphasis on puppet handling this year, so you'll have an opportunity to work out any problems you have in this area, in addition to gathering more knowhow about design and craftsmanship.

Incidentally, George Merten will be handling the workshop this year, so it's bound to be a most rewarding two days for all of us.

For the Evanston Junior League, hopeful hostesses for FESTIVAL 1956, Anne Thurman is serving as Chairman with Mary Olson as co-chairman. They and their committees will be working until the last gasp with both the old P of A hands and with Bob Schneidemann, Northwestern University festival chairman, to make this the very best festival ever.

So jot down these dates on the kitchen calendar, will you? August 6, 7, 8, 9 . . . Festival. August 10, 11 . . . Workshop. And please, if you do come up with ideas of any size or variety, will you drop a line to Anne Thurman (Mrs. Edward B. jr.) 2308 Park Place, Evanston, Illinois? Throw in an oar anytime the spirit moves you, there's room for everyone!

Here and There

Howdy Doody, which will have its eighth anniversary this December, began color casting five times a week September 12 and at the same time introduced a new character, Heidi Doody and two new features, — a travel series by Lowell Thomas, Jr., called "A Flight to Adventure" and an African series in color, shot right in the jungle, to say nothing of the "Howdy Doody Comic Book," a delightful new animated cartoon.

Tam O'Shanter, costumers, featured a "Teddy" hand puppet in their sweater ad in N. Y. TIMES lately.

Lea and Gia Wallace, home from an extensive West Coast and Mexican tour have re-opened their Village Dance and Puppet Center, N. Y. City, for the winter.

The "Puppet Master" English publication devoted a page in their August issue to "News from America" mostly from the PJ.

Recommended by several is the new "Film and Tape Recording" magazine published at Severna Park, Md., said to be the only magazine of its kind . . . to help you get better results from your tape recorder. Now that tape is being so widely used by puppeteers, it might be worth your while to look it up. Six issues — \$2.00 . . . money back guarantee.

Casino Theater, Toronto, featured "fabulous puppets" by the Trotter Brothers. Who are they, Canadians?

Peggy Bridge Marionettes billed for the New York Society for Ethical Culture . . . also for Brooklyn Academy. Also at the Brooklyn Academy, Feb. 4, the Salzburg Marionettes with "Don Giovanni" and the Nutcracker Suite".

Metropolitan Museum of Art will feature the Salzburg Marionettes on March 31 and Burr Tillstrom in "St. George and the Dragon" on April 28. Jot these dates down now on your calendar.

Coming to us this week is a brochure from Athena Films, 165 W. 46 St., New York, reminding us of the Steven's film, "The Santa Claus Suit," a wonderful film for Christmas showing, stressing moral and spiritual values. You can't go wrong on this film.

The two puppets, Spots and Stripes, are preparing for Christmas. Stripes declares he must see Santa Claus or he will not believe in him. In order to satisfy his friend, Spots dresses up as Santa, but his deception is discovered and Stripes is disillusioned and angry with Spots.

Later, the discarded Santa Claus suit becomes animated and visits Stripes for a chat. In reply to the puppet's disbelief in things he can't see, the suit points out that many valuable things in life are unseen — wind, electricity, God, prayer, etc. — but people still believe in them.

Stripes comes to see that a person accepts many things he cannot see or touch. He realizes that Spots' desire to make him happy by dressing as Santa Claus is very real, though intangible, and in the true spirit of friendship and good will. Spots and Stripes are reconciled, and look forward to celebrating Christmas.

Also listed is "The Toymaker," — in this writer's estimation, a film that the Stevens will never surpass. "The Toymaker" has been acclaimed as "a film of greatness" (Educational Screen); a gem of film making" (World Council of Christian Churches); subtle and powerful in its implications for improved human relations" (School of Education, New York University).

"The King and the Lion" is another notable presentation of those excellent puppets, Spots and Stripes, who rose to stardom in "The Toymaker."

From the Palace, N. Y., — Pat Hill and Larry Delma — "Experienced puppeteers, showing standout dexter-

ity in their string movement and voice backgrounds, scoring especially with a puppet take-off of Jack Webb." From the Embassy Club, London, "Frank and Maisie Munford have a standard puppet act but score when they move through the audience, the sort of participation seldom encountered in night clubs," — young operators might try this stunt.

A John Gallagher cartoon pictured a fond Mama manipulating a marionette puppet with a spoon feeding Junior his cereal. What next will they expect of the poor puppet?

Wonderama . . . Paul Ashley has a spot with marionettes. The STAGE advertises Ron Field's marionette musical "The Enchanted Hour," featuring over 100 puppets in ten scenes. They recently performed at Buckingham Palace for the Queen.

Leon Jason created the puppet, "Jingle Dingle" featured in Sandy Becker's early worm show on WABD, N. Y. Burton Wolfe, Chester Herman and Ingrid Green, Nassau, N. Y., included a benefit show for the Federation of Jewish Women among their activities.

Hunter College Assembly Hall Programs announces a world premiere of "The Greatest Sound Around" by William Mayer, featuring John Langstaff, baritone, with Max Leavitt, puppeteer and narrator, — a new work about a contest to see which animal can make the most perfect sounds, — the audience participating. And, to climax the season, "Song of the Nightingale" by Ivor Stravinski, based on Anderson's beautiful fairy tale, "The Emperor's Nightingale," produced with Chinese puppets.

Macy Goode, D. D. S., Long Branch, N. J., enthusiastic young professional man, is daily getting deeper and deeper in his hobby, puppetry . . . emceed his Magic Club show with puppets in one of his first public appearances. More of him later.

Brandon Films list "Life Hangs by

a Thread," color film showing how marionettes are made and operated by Dr. Crawford S. Brown; "Shadowland" a step by step demonstration of transparent shadows by Jero Magon, producer of "Marco's Millions" and many other plays . . . a black and white with color sequence. Also "The Steadfast Tin Soldier," a Danish Culture Film written and directed by Ivo Coprino, enchanting puppets and a delightful musical score. Mary Shortt says of it, "Faithful to the text, done with taste . . . just the kind of film we need . . . music, toys, flavor of Anderson are all one could desire. A moving and almost lyrical film . . . children will love it."

"Zanzabell in Paris," is also a highly recommended film, produced by Starevick in cooperation with Sanika Bo, founder of Centrillion Children's Film Society in Paris, — dialogue and songs in French . . . English title superimposed.

Ad in VARIETY . . . "Nosy Rosy and Snooper . . . beloved as dolls by children, available for TV, puppets and animation. Jean Hackett."

Bits of news from The Detroit Art Institute . . . Lee and Cedric Head spent Oct. 24 to Nov. 7 restoring the 19th century Deaves and Meador Marionettes for a revival show on Dec. 27th and 29th. Original puppets, program and music. George Latshaw spent a week end first of Nov. discussing direction of the prize winning script which he will do with the Detroit Junior League and members of the Detroit Guild. George Merten conducted a workshop in marionette construction and manipulation Nov. 7 through Nov. 12.

The Roberto Lago tour sponsored by the Department of Theater Arts of the Detroit Art Institute has progressed to the point where complete itinerary can appear in next JOURNAL. This is another of those long awaited events about to be realized . . . watch for dates and locations next issue.

Basil Milovsoroff was the first performer to appear on this season's Saturday afternoon programs for children at the Akron, Ohio, Art Institute. "Sinbad" was the attraction. He also rated an unusually fine article with colored pics of himself, home and family in the fall issue of Vermont life.

Roy Heatherington, in "The Merry Mailman," WOR-TV announces songs, puppets and live animals. We get mixed up in odd company sometimes.

Eric Bramall contributed an excellent article "Collector's Pieces Among Puppets," complete with fine historic photograph in the "Apollo," a very fine collector's magazine.

In Paris the Theatre De Le'Etolle features Les Piccoli De Podrecca from Italy . . . a clever bull-fight bit, a take off on a stuffy concert singer and her meek pianist, an undersea ballet and other showy numbers rate it as one of the best of its type.

Shari Lewis, WABC-TV, singer, dancer, puppeteer and what have you, wins praise for her part of the moppet show, "Look to Win" with Bob Nelson, directed by Roger Shope.

Greta and Henry Carr Sherman, who made their Festival appearance on the Pot Pouri got a nice two page spread in the mag section of the CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER recently. Appearing before school audiences they should be getting a nice reception as they have been advocating the creative approach to puppetry . . . "Its exaggeration and makebelieve that stirs the imagination and touches the heart," Henry stresses. The Shermans hope the day will come when they can forsake the business world for puppets alone.

It's still not too late to say that the Bairs scored again in the Max Liebman production of "Heidi," a musical

production of Johanna Sypri's children's classic. Starring, but not outshining the puppets were Wally Cox and Jeannie Carson.

Rumor, not verified that Burr Tillstrom has made a deal with Decca for a Christmas album wherein all the characters sing together for the first time.

George Latshaw did a workshop for the Dayton League . . . met Mrs. Munger, co author of THE BOOK OF PUPPETS, Don Williams of the "Sammy Squirrel" TV show there and Larry Smith who does the puppets for "Tick Tock Toy Shop" on WHIO.

Lalani, who does the "Dragnet Hula" for sailors and marines, with encores a plenty is the creation of Jerry Hartnett, young sailor who started puppets for school shows at the age of twelve . . . hope to be a pro when Navy days are over.

Notes from the Gilmores have been coming in from all over Europe, telling of their wonderful trip and the many puppet contacts that they have made. Rather than report these to you we hope to persuade them to describe their trip in the next JOURNAL, in detail.

A unique ad appears in STAGE: "We R Al 4 TV". Two freaks (one marionette made from a washboard, one from a teakettle) are listed among the 2000 freaks available from O. Smith and Co., Lewisham, Eng.

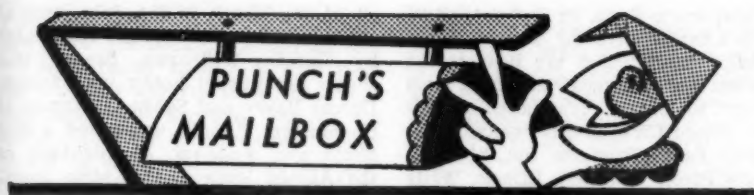
Frank Paris was a guest on the Paula Stone Show, Nov. 13 . . . also appeared at the McMillan Theater, Columbia University Nov. 2.

Enid Blyton, writer of books for children turns her talent to writing plays for TV . . . featuring the Noddy Puppets, collaboration with puppeteer Peter Hayes . . . station CTV.

Give a Membership for Christmas

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Rod Young—Punch's Mailbox, Box 14, University of Richmond, Virginia

"Listen, Punch," said Judy, as she typed out a readable column from his scrawled notes, "I think that you ought to change your style."

"Style be hanged," cried Punch, gaily smacking her over the head with his stick. Let's just stick to the news."

And the news is good. Everyone is busy and everyone who is busy is happy. Why not add to the general happiness by quickly sticking your personal news and views into an envelope and mailing it to us at once? Even Judy, who has to type it into shape, will appreciate it! And here's what we've discovered in recent weeks.

The Carol Channing musical comedy, "The Vamp," which opened November 11th in New York City, employs an exciting, laugh getting puppet snake in one of the production numbers. It is really the re-vamped arm of David Neuman who plays the dancing snake charmer.

The September-October issue of STORY ART MAGAZINE contains a delightful short story about Bobo the Puppet. This is the true story of a little hand puppet who entertains every Saturday afternoon in the auditorium of a department store in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania where his mistress, Mrs. Roy C. Hawn, presents a new play each week.

Back in New York City, Shirley Miles O'Donnell has accepted a position on the staff of Columbia Teachers College. We have a feeling that her puppets won't let her stay strictly

academic for long! During the month of August a complete study of puppetry was offered by Miss Mildred Page at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Hard at work on script and puppets for "Why the Chimes Rang," Eleanor Vosburgh, a Junior at Westhampton College, is also very active in puppet classes taught by Rod Young at the University of Richmond, Virginia. Eleanor and her partner in puppetry, Judy Cooke, still in High School in their home town of Durham, N. C., have high hopes for this special TV show at Christmas time.

Roderick Fletcher of Dorset, England, was honored when his recording of "The Puppet Dance" and "March of the Xmas Pudding" were accepted at Buckingham Palace for the Queen's children, The Duke of Cornwall and Princess Anne. Both musical pieces were written and composed by Mr. Fletcher and recorded by E.M.I. Studios Ltd.

Edith Serrell of Dobbs Ferry, N. Y., let's us know that she has, with great pleasure and gusto, been making heads for the Stoughtons in Majure, Marshall Islands, who are doing Polynesian folksongs and dances with marionettes. Hans Waecker was playing his school assembly shows in Houston, Texas, the week of September 26 and had a good visit with Rena Prim. He is playing the Gulf Coast for Southern Assemblies, it seems. At last a Guild has been organized in Houston and con-

gratulations to Rena, its first president!

Don't throw anything away! Here's a magic "stuff" that we hear works wonders and will repair anything from hosiery to boats. It's called Kling-Kote Liquid Cloth and is available only from Bard's Products, Inc., 816 University Place, Evanston, Illinois. Write for information.

The Brooklyn Academy of Music, N. Y., is going to town this fall with puppet activity. We're glad! Listed under special events in their program were television's celebrated puppeteers, Bil and Cora Baird, in their marionette extravaganza featuring "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves." Performances were Saturday afternoon and evening, October 29. Also under special events will come the Salzburg Marionette Theatre under the artistic direction of Hermann Aicher. This will occur next February.

The Museum's "Matinees For Mop-pets" presents Saturday afternoon performances featuring the Peggy Bridge Marionettes. These will be presented on Dec. 10, Jan. 7, Mar. 10 and on April 14. On Dec. 3 this same company will present "The Emperor's Nightingale" at the N. Y. Society for Ethical Culture at the Auditorium on 64th Street.

From an Earl Wilson column we note that Burr Tillstrom and Fran Allison may start filming "Kukla, Fran and Ollie" to enable them to accept New York and Hollywood offers. Heaps of bouquets can be thrown lovingly at Burr for his performance in "Alice in Wonderland" on TV, Sunday, October 23. Under the guiding genius of Maurice Evans, this 90 minutes in full color was remarkable evidence of what place TV can really take as a contributor to our culture if handled wisely and well. VARIETY made special comment on Burr's manipulation magic of the oysters in their wonderful scene. And we also noticed that Ollie isn't the only one who can sing!

Miss Susan Fitch was chosen Hobby-

ist of the Month in the July issue of PROFITABLE HOBBIES. Nominated by Dorothy Willcoxon, Susan, who shares her puppet hobby with friends Dorcas Baker and Susan Gliessman of Champaign, Illinois, was rated a fine photo and write-up. A highlight of the August issue of this same magazine was M. G. Fly's account of youthful puppeteer, Terry Root, active in Wichita, Kansas. A fine article called "Marionettes For Young Children" appeared in the August issue of SUNSET magazine on pages 76 and 77. Ideas were illustrated for appealing and flexible cloth covered spool marionettes.

The Hollywood Marionettes played the Empire Theatre, Hackney, Britain, during the week of Oct. 19. Vic Charles continues his artful act on ice in "Holiday on Ice" at the Conrad Hilton Hotel, Chicago.

After making a squirrel handpuppet for a television commercial series for a savings and loan company Bill Jones, Tucson, Arizona, plunged into a host of shows during the busy fall season. Six shows for Bennillas School Carnival, 3 shows for the Davis-Monthan Air Force Base School Carnival, 3 shows for Gertrude Cragin School Carnival and a group of shows for the Tucson Boys Chorus at their annual (you guessed it) Carnival!

A special workshop for the Children's Theatre group of the Junior League of Brooklyn met with Alfred Wallace at league headquarters in October to consult on and prepare their current production of "Little Red Riding Hood." This reminds us of the excitement we felt this summer while viewing the fabulous "Red Riding Hood" sequence included in "Cinerama Holiday." At least five minutes of this portion of the film is devoted to closeups of both puppets and children watching them at the theatre in the French Tuilleries. Don't miss the film at one of the theaters in our major cities. This portion is remarkable!

By this time the Gilmores, Spence and Alan, are back on American soil. We were happy to have a card from them as they enjoyed their visits with puppeteers in England and on the continent. They were especially lucky to see the wonderful Shakespeare productions at Stratford with the Oliviers and were equally lucky to visit with the Lanchesters. Waldo Lanchester's sister, known to American audiences well, was also beneficial towards making the TV extravaganza of "Alice" a knockout. Elsa Lanchester has also appeared regularly with the live portion at the Turnabout Theatre and is well known to puppeteers in this respect.

We are reminded of the interesting interview with actor Francis L. Sullivan who let it be known to the NEW YORK TIMES that his favorite television show was "Kukla, Fran and Ollie." He was quoted as exclaiming: "That's the finest thing on television. It's the closest approach to the art of Chaplin that we have today."

Lettie Connell writes happily of her work with Ralph Chesse's "Brother Buzz" show on KPIX, Saturday mornings at 9 a.m. in L. A. Nancy Cole, Senior Theatre Major at Carnegie Tech, sends on an interesting article from the Pittsburgh SUN-TELEGRAPH about her dolls and puppets. She has also finished a new Guignol Theatre and we know that her audiences in the Pittsburgh area are enjoying it as much as she does.

Advance notice — The Northern Ontario puppet groups are holding their first Puppet Festival in October of 1956 at Kirkland Lake. We hope for more details later.

"How to Pull Strings . . . With No Strings Attached" is the name of a new brochure sent out by WSB-TV, Atlanta, Georgia, telling of the success of Don and Ruth Gilpin's daily program, "Woody Willow." Don and Ruth have been going to town with Woody who takes off every now and then to do

personal appearance shows at Rich's Department Store and various schools in the Atlanta area. Jane McGuirt and the Gilpins had good visits with the William Jacobys who were vacationing through the city recently. Woody's new secretary is Nan Van Dyke. Pretty good! Not every puppet has his own personal secretary! Mr. Don and Woody — not to mention Mrs. Don — are looking forward to their new set-up in a brand new WSB-TV building.

First show of the season at the University of Richmond, Virginia, was Kenneth Grahame's "The Reluctant Dragon" adapted and produced by Rod Young. A preview show was presented for interested persons in the area on November 10 while two performances were open to the general public on the 11th. A Hans Anderson Trilogy, "The Snow Queen," "The Fir Tree" and "The Little Match Girl," are slated for production in the University Chapel on December 9 at 8 p.m.

Jimmy Shaw, puppeteer in the touring "Holiday on Ice" show spent some time with the Kelly's and they give good report on his marvelous manipulative powers.

For three years the public library in Salina, Kansas, has presented a puppet show for the children every Saturday morning during the school year. The Master of Ceremonies is Sherman Ripley, veteran magician and author of two books about magic, who conjurs up a trick or two to start things off. The puppets are made and manipulated by Eleanor Owens and other members of the library staff who write and produce a new playlet each week.

Gertrude Melchior has been putting more "Umph" into her act since we saw it at Bowling Green. These changes plus a new tape recorder and puppet rack are helping make her school assembly programs smash hits. Lois Fox, South Carolina, has also invested in a new tape recorder from advice received from Felix Smith at Fest and

she has new lights ordered too. Her newest puppets are dressed frogs with humorous action and lots of appeal. She has about six weeks bookings lined up away from home plus a large group of Christmas shows.

Betty and Terry Root are sponsor hunting after fulfilling a contract for a camera company with "Nip and Tuck and Aunt Bets" on a Wichita, Kansas, TV station. The busy Roots have two other live shows besides their aired program and have recently been making personal appearances with Nip and Tuck.

Lew Parsons makes with a new brochure that sparkles with Lew and Aladdin — four scenes with special puppets, gorgeous scenery, unusual lighting effects and original music! Mary Williams has recently loaded up on lush new fabrics to re-costume several of her puppets since Fest and has added a one-string teddy bear to her act.

"Puppets May Save a Life!" Or so indicates a feature article in the RICHMOND TIMES DISPATCH one Sunday in early October. Hal Barnes, 8; Chris Nuckols, 9; Mike Paulette, 11; and Stanley Hughes, 12 contributed proceeds from a recent show to the Tuckahoe Rescue Squad's fund. The show showed tremendous imagination and teamwork.

John S. Sisson, active children's entertainer in Wellston, Massachusetts, brings to our attention the A. J. Liebling description of an English seaside Punch and Judy show that appeared on page 39 of the July 23 NEW YORKER magazine as part of an article on his visit to Weymouth, England. Punch in this version was given a modern bit of assistance as fighter Don Cockell beat up Rocky Marciano with "historical inaccuracy that the children accepted with enthusiasm." Another item sent was a cartoon from "The World's Only Magical Weekly," ABRACADABRA, which, though primarily devoted to magic as a pro-

fession and a hobby, now and then includes something relative to its allied art, puppetry. The issue was number 495, July 23, 1955, and depicts an antagonized mother turning towards her diminutive husband, as their child regales at a seaside Punch show, and says: "Let's go to a show, he says!"

The QUINCY PATRIOT LEDGER on Saturday, July 30, devoted a feature column with picture to artist and puppeteer W. A. Dwiggins. With Miss Dorothy Abbey of Hingham, Mass., Mr. Dwiggins is producing a new book for puppet lovers. It will be a one act puppet play by Mr. Dwiggins entitled "Prelude to Eden." We can look forward to this work by a master craftsman and artist.

In closing, we would again like to call to your attention the fine new book, THE PUPPET AS AN ACTOR, by Hans Josef Schmidt who teaches creative dramatics and puppetry at Hull House in Chicago. We have had opportunity to go over the material for simple puppets as presented in the edition published by the Coach House Press Inc., 53 West Jackson, Chicago 4, Illinois, and will recommend it to beginners and those interested in quick yet effective hand puppets. The material list is inexpensive and exclusive of all needs and Mr. Schmidt has written a thought provoking foreword stressing his views about puppetry as a creative art medium for all levels.

"Jooo - dy," cried Punch, "You get that column in the mail right away. Punch waved his stick three times around in the air, knocked the typewriter off the proscenium, and busily got to work cleaning up his stage as Judy ran helter-skelter off towards the post-office. Take your cue from Judy. Run to the Post office right now and send us your news!"

Rod Young
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